

Final thesis

Regional Inequality and the Populist vote.

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Abstract:

Since the 2008 financial crisis the populations of the West are growing increasingly dissatisfied with their governments policy. New (illiberal) populist parties and leaders have sprung up all over Europe, Great Britain and the USA. While these movements seem to have much in common they differ by nation. In the USA and Great Britain geography was often a decisive arbiter of voting behavior. In this thesis I will examine if the same holds true for the Netherlands. By comparing socio-economic data with election results I will compare municipalities with each other and see if I can predict the amount of people vote for populist parties in that municipality.

While cities often have more young people who vote different from their older countrymen the results are nonetheless not strongly divided by geographic factors.

Income and age groups have a meaningful effect, but there is no strong divide between east and west or center periphery in the Netherlands like there was in the UK

Table of contents

1. Abstract	1
2. Table of Contents	2
3. Introduction	3
4. Theoretic Framework	5
5. Data and Methodology	11
6. Results	15
7. Conclusions & Discussion	20
8. References	21

Introduction.

Political and social scientists have been shocked to see a new rise in populism in the western democracies in the last decade (Fukuyama, 2018) Others claim to have seen this new movement coming from a mile away (Blyth, 2013). The current neoliberal capitalist majorities can (barely) hold onto power in some states The Netherlands, Germany, France or the UK but have lost their majorities in others like Italy and Hungary.

It is clear that there is a lot of resentment or discontent within the voting population. Whether this is a case of Identity politics (Fukuyama, 2018) or economic inequality (Engelen, 2018) or a mix of these factors is still up for debate but one thing is clear: People are angry and feel they are not being heard. Many people did not see their situation improve, or not enough compared to their fellow countrymen.

Meanwhile political policy has been about attracting foreign investments and austerity, which means a low corporate tax rate, privatization, cutting social services budgets and gutting unions. (Blyth, 2013)

This has been going on since Reagan and Thatcher but the turning point was the 2008 financial crisis. When the banks were bailed out to save the global financial system and the public, many of whom lost their jobs and or houses had to deal with the austerity policies to pay for the bailout. (Blyth, 2013)

The ballot box is specifically designed so that the people can make their grievances known with the politicians in charge and voters have made good use of it by voting for anti-establishment parties or decisions. Such as the upset of Brexit and Donald Trump. If the mainstream political parties want to maintain control they will have to listen to these voters and their problems and wishes. The new populist parties or reactionaries often have a good idea of the issues and play into their resentment but often don't have concrete solutions that improve the situation. (Mudde, 2017)

The financial crisis is seen as a turning point. Bailing out the banks was the straw that broke the camel's back and made it clear to a lot of people who is served by the politicians and who isn't. (Blyth, 2013)

Since then a number of populist or anti-establishment political parties (both left and right-wing) have grown up and threatened the western liberal order. Brexit, Trump, France's Marine Le Pen, Hungary's Viktor Orban, Podemos, Greece's Golden dawn, Italy's Five Star and League, Dutch PVV, Germany's AfD, Polish PiS and many more are all examples of the rising discontent within western democracy. (Judis, 2016)

Populism is a growing political movement that is gaining speed all over the western world. Not least of those is the movement in the Netherlands. It is seen as a threat to democratic traditions by the established parties. In a way it is international, but has specific traits for each population it stems from. To understand populism in each nation requires research specific to that nation to try and find the underlying discontent that make people want to vote for a populist party and the policies that might prevent that. (Mudde, 2017)

So far a lot is written on populism in the Netherlands, but the geographical factor has not gotten as much attention. A vote is a very personal choice, but personal choices are impacted by many factors. Among them environmental factors. In this thesis I will explore the

socio-economic data per municipality in The Netherlands and look for a connection in voting behavior.

I will look at the difference between the average income, age groups, immigration percentages, population density, employment numbers, availability of amenities and real estate development of all Dutch municipalities and compare them to the percentage of votes for populist parties in the 2019 provincial elections. My aim is to test the hypothesis that municipalities that have lower income or less job opportunities and other socio-economic differences have a higher percentage of the population that vote for populist parties. To do this I have a method comprised of 3 parts. First a qualitative part to test which parties fall under the criteria “populist.” Then 2 quantitative parts to test data from 2017 with the 2019 election and the trajectory from data from 2009 and 2011 to the data of 2017.

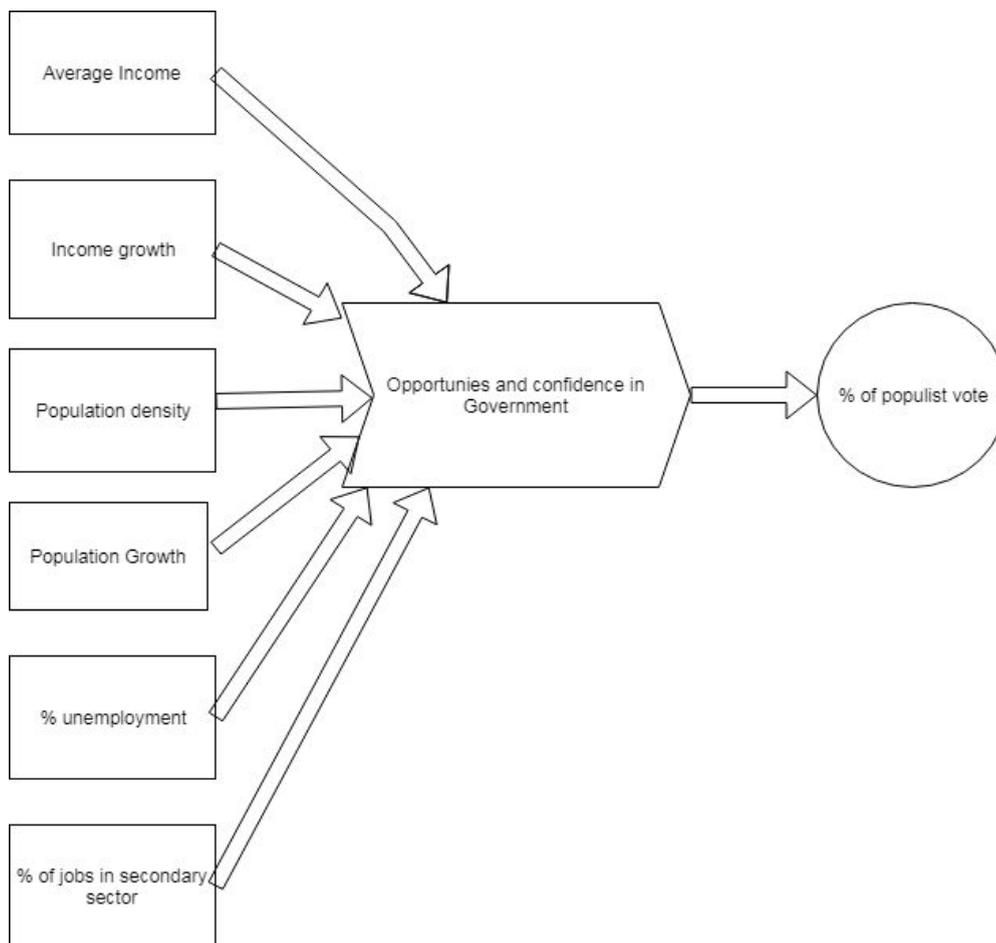


Figure 1. Conceptual model

In this model I've visualized my hypothesis and the relations between the variables and the populist vote. My hypothesis is that municipalities where more people are unemployed, with less job opportunities in the industrial sector and where the average income is lower there will be more people who are dissatisfied, have lower confidence in the government (Damhuis 2017) with the current administration and therefore vote for populist parties. In addition to that I will test the theory that municipalities that have seen low population growth and income growth are more likely to vote populist leading to a loss of trust in the government and therefore a higher populist vote. (Schmeets, 2015)

Theoretical framework.

Globalization and most specifically neoliberal globalization has been the main theme in world politics and economics. (Blyth 2017) This has increased economic growth, lifted millions out of poverty and has unlocked many consumer items for an ever increasing amount of consumers. which in turn provides more growth. (Mullard, 2004)

The overarching theme has been to give tax breaks to 'job creators' Not to overregulate important industries to promote competition, to let the free market do its thing and to privatize centuries old state companies like public transport companies, energy providers, mail services and healthcare providers. (Blyth, 2017)

Overall the results have been positive, the western world has enjoyed the most peaceful times in history since WWII. GDP and GDP per capita has gone up and women have found their way into the workplace. But this new wealth has not been distributed evenly. Not among nations and not within nations. On average it means less economic difference between countries and more difference within countries (Piketty, 2015)

Because of this uneven distribution not everyone has seen their lives improved by these trends. For the most part it is unskilled workers that fall behind, they experience competition from immigrants competing for their jobs in their home country. And the companies they work for have to compete against companies that enjoy cheaper labor abroad. Or in some cases, the companies themselves move abroad leaving many unemployed in the original country. (Essletzbichler et al., 2018) Meanwhile in the news it is reported that everything is great; economic growth, cheaper goods, many new employment opportunities, soaring stock prices and more and more wealth for the average man and woman. Plenty of Dutch, British and Americans did not see their situation improve. For them this new system has failed. They are dubbed by multiple scholars as: "The losers of globalization". (Milner, 2019) (Hobolt, 2016) (Milanovic, 2014) This is where the resentment and the distrust in politics comes from (Essletzbichler et al., 2018)

And this is where populist come in. Often their rhetoric hits the right note with the discontent within the population. Their anger resonates among the discontents and they vote for populists en massè. Not because they agree with their policy standpoints all that much, but because their anger finds a way to protest against the establishment through the ballot box (Fukuyama, 2018)

Inglehart and Norris (2019) describe 2 streams of populism, one with its roots in economic inequality and another as a backlash against the change in values.

With an economic populist movement you would often see left wing parties rise in popularity, they would argue for more social services, fairer taxes, more jobs, affordable housing etc. A cultural backlash is a revolt against multiculturalism, immigration, accelerating changes in neighborhoods, globalization and identity politics.

You could argue that the current polarization is a good thing because now there is more variety to choose from. Mouffe (2013) states: "The current choice is a vote between Pepsi and Coca Cola." All ideologies are variants of the same. In the current iteration we can only be in favor or against the EU. We need to politicize. A more left wing view and a right wing

view are needed. Of course this will mean conflict, but conflict in a political sense is good. From this conflict and debate, new legislation will be made.

Populism in the Netherlands.

The first real resurgence of populism in the Netherlands happened with Pim Fortuyn in 2002. While maybe not a real populist himself, although he has been accused of it plenty, he still brought to the center of political debate the issues that the current populist parties campaign on. (Dorussen, 2004)

His sudden popularity and anti-immigration stance shocked many people and the foreign press. The otherwise so tolerant Netherlands created a politician that was nationalistic, called for traditional values, law and order, anti-immigration and wanted to increase efforts to deport immigrants (Eckardt, 2003)

His subsequent murder was another shock that ended his political party after one election but did nothing to quell the discontent behind the short lived political party of Pim Fortuyn. After LPF died with its front man a new populist party started. The PVV picked up where LPF left off. Where Pim Fortuyn managed to distance himself and his ideas from the far right x PVV embraced it. (Dorussen, 2004)

Many journalists, sociologist, anthropologists and political theorist have poured over the question: Who votes for these parties and why?

“PVV-voters just want to be heard, Wilders is the only one to say something about the failing system they say. But Damhuis sees an important similarity: „PVV-voters, almost without exception, feel disenfranchised by politics. Many PVV-voters have a negative experience in their own environment and connect that to a failing system. Finally, they say, someone has the guts to say something about it. That he was convicted by the judge for his `Less Moroccans` only adds to his credibility. Wilders has guts, his voters say. Hé does!.”

(Steenbergen 2016)

“Important themes are the climate and migration. “Everyone from conflict zones is welcome. Then you can stay. But you have to leave when it is safe again, we’ll even help you with that. But there are also fortune-seekers who have a big mouth to boot. Wilders shouts it.” Baudet says it more diplomatically.”

(Zeggelaar, 2019)

Damhuis (2017) describes the main feeling of people who have decided to vote for the PVV. In a single word it is: “Wronged”. Of the myriad of people from different ages and different background they all feel a sense of injustice or of being abandoned by the mainstream political parties. These are the voters that feel disenfranchised to by the mainstream political parties and will take an opportunity to vote for the party that shouts the loudest against the establishment. This phenomenon is known as the protest vote. (Bergh, 2004)

These profile sketches are supported by data from the Central Bureau of Statistics. (Schmeets, 2015) Research into motivations and feelings of the electorate show that

PVV-voters are far more likely to be cynical about the political process and have far less trust that political leaders are looking out for their concerns. These concerns were both cultural and economic in nature. PVV-voters were more likely to be: Male, not highly educated and received a middle or lower income. Variables that did not matter so much were age or marital status.

What set the PVV-voters apart from the rest of the electorate was their distrust in their fellow man and democratic institutions.

Geographical significance.

Populism is not only a factor of demographics, culture or economics. Geography plays an important role. In both the Trump vote and the Brexit vote the big cities were more in favor of the establishment. In the USA rural areas, and especially declining rural and (formerly) industrial counties overwhelmingly voted for Trump. (McQuarrie, 2017)

These counties, often within the so-called 'fly-over states' are full with people who have good reasons to be angry. Their job opportunities have vanished through automation or foreign competition, social services and public spending has declined, owners of shops and services on the stereotypical American small town main street have lost an economic battle to an ever growing Walmart. (Massengill, 2013)

Rural America Goes Red

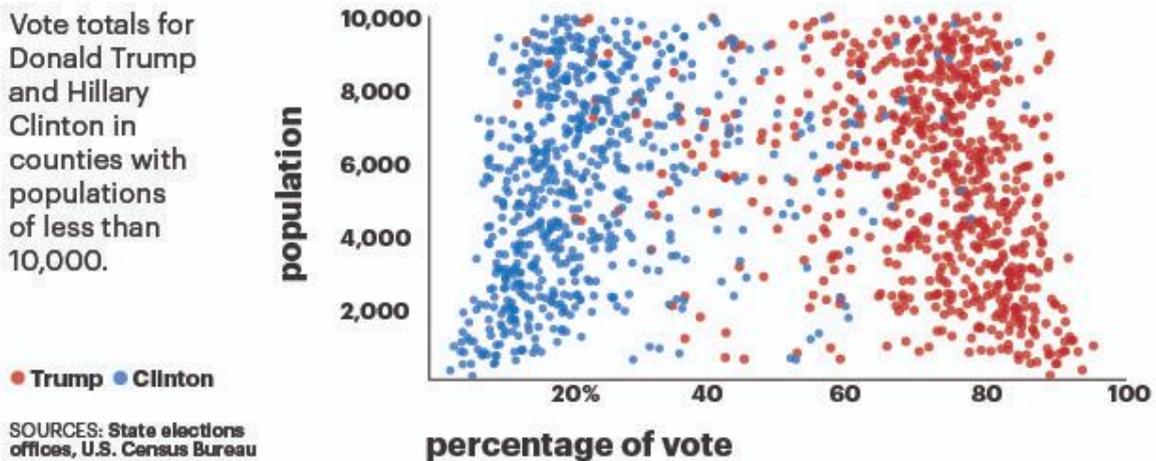


Figure 2. Vote totals for counties with populations less than 10,000 Source: The Hill (2017)

Figure 2 shows that most counties with low population overwhelmingly voted for Trump. And it is no wonder, these are the places that have declined most in the past decades. Many sources of employment have closed down or have seen automation to an extent that only a fraction of people are still employed in those fields. Most famously the coal mining sector, Trump promised the return of jobs for these kinds of sectors, while Hillary Clinton promised retraining budgets. (Goetz et al., 2016) Trump also flipped a few states that voted for Obama back towards him. These states were mostly the industrial Heartland states. Also known as the Rustbelt states. These states were manufacturing powerhouses and have shown steady decline for decades. And it was the Rustbelt states that swung the election away from Hillary Clinton towards Trump. (McQuarrie, 2017) It seems most important wasn't just job availability, but their way of life. Fukuyama (2018) reinforces the importance of this desire as the need for dignity.

Brexit and Trump are often mentioned in the same breath and rightly so, both have an economic and cultural factor. Fed by a growing discontent with the establishment, neoliberal policy and austerity. But they do have their differences. (MacLeod & Jones 2018) In the UK geography was also a strong indicator of the Brexit vote. While in the USA most cities voted for Clinton and the rural areas voted for Trump. In the UK it was only London that overwhelmingly voted to remain in the EU, many other cities voted in favor of Brexit. (Green 2017)

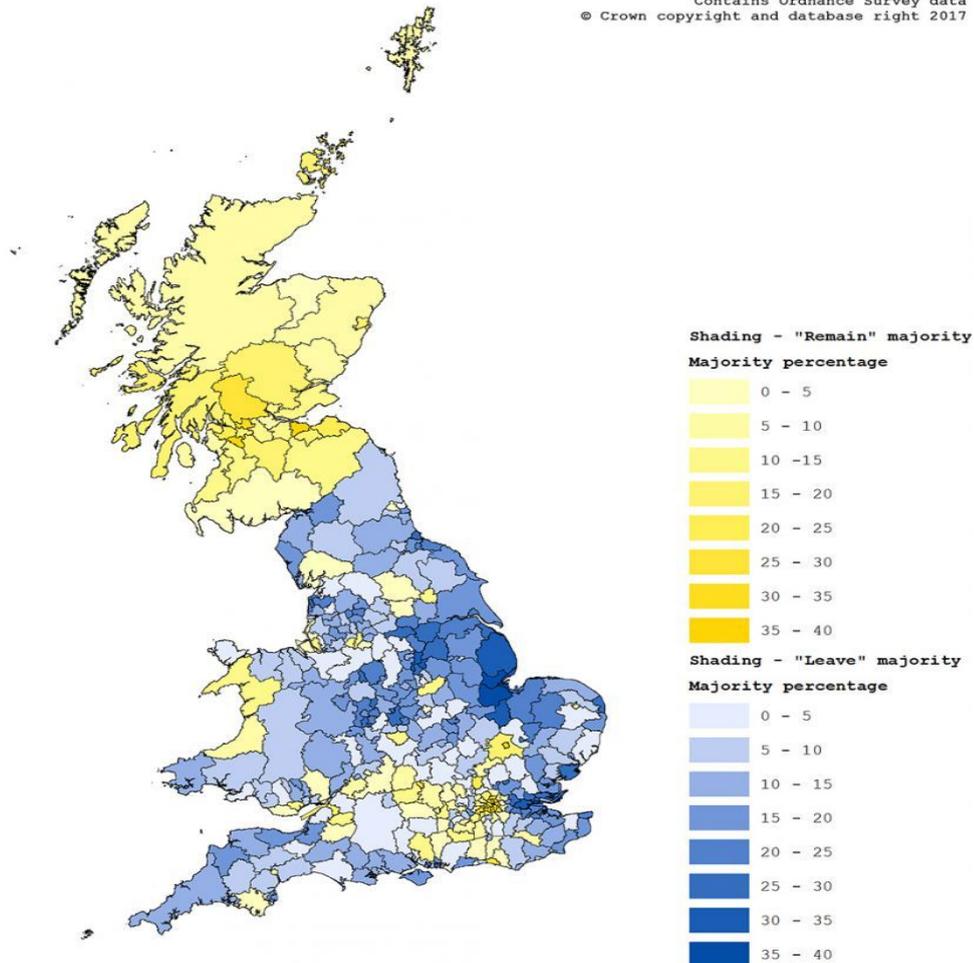


Figure 1 source: Green (2017) Brexit vote per district.

Another thing that really stands out is that all of Scotland's regions voted to remain in the EU. Scotland also has its fair share of regions that have seen decline and rural regions that have not kept up with the pace of economic growth as the cities. (MacLeod & Jones 2018) But this trend has not resulted into a populist fervor to leave the EU.

This result would mean that there is something else going on in the Brexit vote.

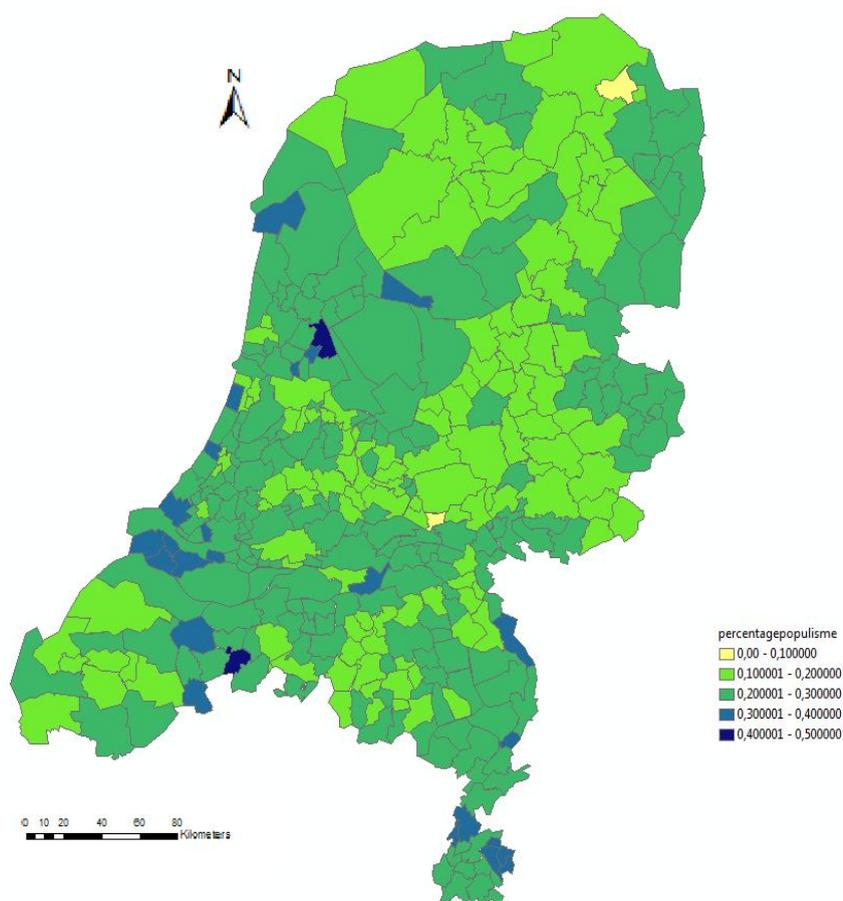
That it is not purely economical and also has a significant cultural factor.

Many of the slogans are about sovereignty: Take back Control, Take back Britain, No longer bow to the EU technocrats. (Vote leave 2016)

The Brexit referendum and Trump vote were very regionally polarized. In much of the Dutch literature populism is not defined as a regional phenomenon but a national one.

In the Netherlands we have plenty of rural areas that see decline. Shrinking population and the decline of services and shops form a negative feedback loop that make many rural areas less attractive places to live than the main cities. (Van Dam et al., 2008)

If we expect the same factors that made the Trump presidency and Brexit happen in the Netherlands to fuel a similar populist movement we might find out in which regions people harbor the most discontent or resentment by looking at the same sort of economic and demographic distributions between municipalities.



Map 2. Populist vote per municipality in the Dutch 2019 provincial elections.

Map 2 shows there is no clear distinction to be found between north and south or urban and rural regions. There is a small distinction to be seen as center / periphery as it shows that many regions on the border with Germany have a high populist vote percentage compared to the regions in the heart of the Netherlands. However there are also many regions that voted populist in the center and main urban areas. The discontent seem to be spread evenly across the country besides a few outliers.

Data & Methodology:

To determine which parties are populist I used the overall rhetoric of their most prominent electable front-man or woman. I used Mudde's (2017) definition of populism. He makes no distinction between left or right wing populism, just populism in itself:

“An ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people”.

I have analysed the national party program for each major national party and listened to several speeches and public appearances for all 13 national parties. I have not taken into account provincial parties. Their share of the vote was small in total and it would be nearly impossible to compare them to each other.

There are two parties that fit the description of populism as described by Mudde (2017) These parties are PVV or Party for Freedom and FvD or Forum for Democracy. Both these parties have used rhetoric that describes their view on politics as a battle between a unified people and a corrupt and incompetent elite.

The most notable examples are these:

PVV - speech in court case ‘Minder Marokkanen’ 23-11-2016.

“At least 1 in 5 Dutch would vote PVV today, maybe it is your chauffeur, your gardener, your doctor, or your maid, the girlfriend of the stenographer, your physiotherapist, the nurse in the nursing home of your parents or the baker in the neighborhood., the normal people, the average Dutchman, the people I am so proud of. and they chose me to speak for them. I am their representative, their chosen. I speak what they think. I speak on their behalf. And I do so with conviction and passion. Every day, here, today with you. So please, do not forget, That when you judge me, you do not just judge one man, you judge millions of men and women in the Netherlands. You judge millions of people. People who agree with me People who won't understand a sentence. People who want their country back and who've had enough of the fact that no one listens to them. People who cherish the freedom of speech that is at risk today. Members of the court, you decide over the future of the Netherlands and I'll tell you: If you judge me, you judge half of the Netherlands”

5:00 ~ 6:53

“The public prosecutors are in this case not the representatives of an independent OM, but , the henchmen. The Henchmen of this cabinet. Mister President, the elite have even facilitated this case against me, Indescribable!”

15:00 - 15:20

“And I'll tell you, the battle between the people and the elites will be won by the people. You cannot stop this process here, only accelerate it. We will win, the Dutch people will win and they will remember who was on the right side of history. The common sense will win over the politically correct arrogance.”

24:40 - 25:10

source: PvvPers (2016)

FvD Victory speech after 2019 elections 21 - 03 - 2019

“But just as all these nations of that boreal world, we are being destroyed by the people who are supposed to protect us. We are being undermined by our universities. our journalists, by the people who collect our art subsidies and who design our buildings. And most of all we are being undermined by our ministers. A clique, a clique of upwards failing socialites, meeting-professionals, people who have never read a book in their life. And who have no idea what the most important long term issues are. They rule the governing faculties of our country and make the wrong decisions in a remarkable mix of incompetence and cynical self-interest”

2:00 - 3:00

Source: Forum Democratie (2019)

Notable exceptions were the Socialist Party (SP), DENK and 50plus. These have elements of populism because they complain about ‘the elite’, but did not position themselves as representatives of a unified people or considered the elite to be corrupt.

Gathering Data

The dataset is comprised of Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) data from 2009 2011 2016 and 2017. CBS is a Dutch independent data gathering and analyzing institute operating since 1899. Every year or quarter they collect data from the government or through surveys about the people and regions of the Netherlands. This anonymous data is available for all to use for research purposes.

I wish I could have used more recent numbers for 2019. But the data is only collected after the year is over and it takes a while to compile so even the data for 2018 was not available yet for many variables. Sometimes the data for one variable is not available for one year so I chose to use data from the next closest year. I don't consider this a problem since economic and demographic data is not prone to changing dramatically in a short period of time. For income I used data from 2011 and 2017 since these numbers were not available for 2009. I then link these cases to the election data of the provincial elections from 2019 from the election database provided by the Dutch Kiesraad.

Every Dutch municipality is one case. A few cases are lost because of municipal reorganization between 2017 and 2019 and a few errors in the conversion from excel to SPSS. It should not impact the results significantly. N=282 is still a large enough amount of cases to provide accurate analysis.

My dependent variable is *populistischestemvanopkomst*. That is the total percentage of votes cast for PVV and FvD out of every vote cast.

The independent variables are selected based on the literature discussed in the theory about the American election, Brexit referendum and the Dutch election profiles of 2012. Most variables are straight from CBS, others I have recode myself by dividing two absolute numbers. They are as follows:

Aantalinwonersperkm is the population density calculated by dividing the total land area by the amount of inhabitants.

Procent20tot25 is the percentage of people aged 20 to 25

Procent25tot45 is the percentage of people aged 25 to 45

Procent45tot65 is the percentage of people aged 45 to 65

Procent65tot80 is the percentage of people aged 65 to 80

Procent80enouder is the percentage of people aged 80 and up

@2016immigratieper1000 is the amount of immigrants that have settled in that municipality per 1000 inhabitants in 2016

@2017woningenper1000extra is the amount of new domiciles added to the existing amount of domiciles per 1000. This includes demolished domiciles.

Procentbanenindustrie is the percentage of jobs in the industrial sector (*recoded by me)

Inkomenshuishoudens is the total amount of income per household (excluding student households)

Besteedbaarinkomenhuishoudens is real income which is the amount of income per household with subtracting taxes, insurance premiums, alimony and healthcare premiums (excluding student households)

@nabijheidziekenhuis is the average distance to a hospital in kilometers

@nabijheidgrotessupermarkt is the average distance to a supermarket with a minimum size of 150m² in kilometer

Procentuitkering is the percentage of people with any form of government assistance excluding AOW (Old age benefits, starting at 65 years and 9 months)(*recoded by me)

For the second analysis the dependent variable is the same: *populistischemvanopkomst*. That is the total percentage of votes cast for PVV and FvD out of every vote cast.

Besteedbaarchange Is the change in percent from disposable income in 2011 to 2017

Inwonerskm2change Is the change in percent from inhabitants per square kilometer from 2009 to 2017

Jobsindustrychange is the change in percent from the percentage of available jobs in 2009 to 2017

Reviewing data

To test my hypothesis between the socioeconomic data and the election result I will use 2 Multiple linear regression models. One to compare the most recent static data from 2017 to the 2019 election results and one to compare the difference between 2009 and 2017. This is a standard way to get an accurate calculation on the correlation between a dependent and multiple independent variables.(Moore & McCabe 2006)

Ethics:

Since politics is always a sensitive subject in academics I will go to great efforts to remain neutral. I will purely describe populism as a political phenomenon and will only test the relation between economic and social background and the percent of the populist vote. I will refrain from normative judgement on populism in itself or the parties that I describe as populist. All data is anonymous. No personal voting is recorded, votes are only counted on the municipal level.

Results

At first I will briefly discuss the main independent variables that I put the most research in. Because of the economic and geographic situation in America and Great Britain described in the literature. I thought these variables might have a strong effect in the Netherlands as well. To get an idea of the data and the variance I plotted these variables out in two graphs. There is a high variance in voting behavior in municipalities. The lowest is around 9% populist vote and the highest is over 50%. The rest is divided fairly evenly between 15 and 30%. The two municipalities with nearly 50% populist vote are Edam-Volendam and Rucphen. Edam-Volendam went 40.7% FVD and 9% PVV. Rucphen voted 28.4% PVV and 18.8% FVD. But on the variables of population density and average disposable income, they are both very average.

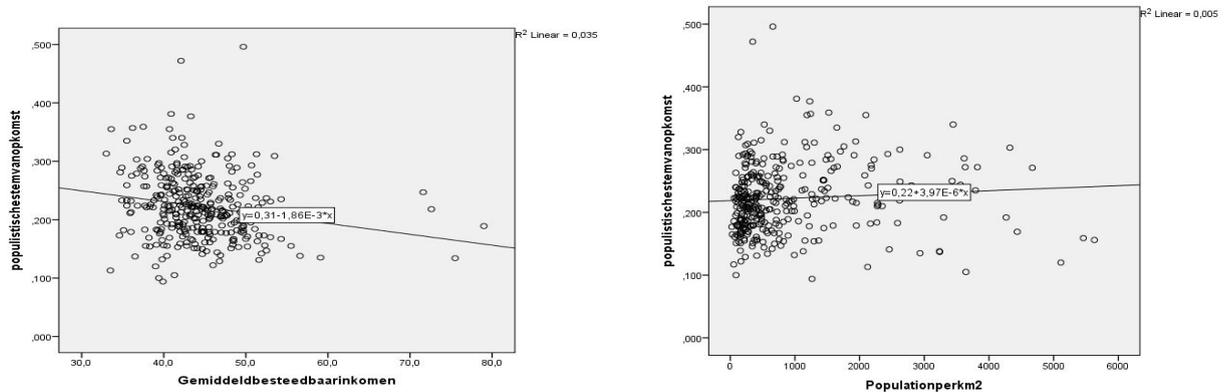


Figure 3: Populist vote and disposable income. Figure 4: Populist vote and population density

In figure 3 and 4 are the scatter/dot graphs of the data from 2017 with the election results from 2019. For both variables the correlation is very low. Especially the population density is not significant. Much lower than I expected them to be considering the significant effects in America. (Reid, 2017). Because smaller municipalities often have less amenities (Rappaport 2008) I expected people that live here would be less satisfied with life.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,603 ^a	,363	,332	4,37051

a. Predictors: (Constant), procentuitkering, @2016immigratieper1000, procent45tot65, procentbanenindustrie, @2017woningenper1000extra, @2016nabijheidziekenhuis, procent80enouder, inkomenhuishoudens, procent20tot25, aantalinwonersperkm, @2017nabijheidgrosupermarkt, besteedbaarinkomenhuishoudens, procent65tot80, procent25tot45

Table 1

Table 1 shows the correlation and shared variance between the dependent variable Populist vote and the independents. The model as a whole has $R = 0.603$ and $R^2 = 0,363$. That means that 36,3% of the variation in the populist vote is explained by these 14 variables.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3072,396	14	219,457	11,489	,000 ^b
	Residual	5386,575	282	19,101		
	Total	8458,971	296			

a. Dependent Variable: procentpopulistenstem

b. Predictors: (Constant), procentuitkering, @2016immigratieper1000, procent45tot65, procentbanenindustrie, @2017woningenper1000extra, @2016nabijheidziekenhuis, procent80enouder, inkomenhuishoudens, procent20tot25, aantalinwonersperkm, @2017nabijheidgrosupermarkt, besteedbaarinkomenhuishoudens, procent65tot80, procent25tot45

Table 2: Fit and significance.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-27,241	17,416		-1,564	,119
	aantalinwonersperkm	,000	,000	,071	,952	,342
	procent20tot25	-,258	,231	-,074	-1,118	,265
	procent25tot45	,986	,333	,471	2,961	,003
	procent45tot65	1,090	,208	,460	5,233	,000
	procent65tot80	1,027	,261	,443	3,934	,000
	procent80enouder	-2,119	,448	-,395	-4,731	,000
	@2016immigratieper1000	,000	,013	,000	,009	,993
	@2017woningenper1000 extra	-,074	,036	-,104	-2,041	,042
	procentbanenindustrie	,036	,037	,053	,952	,342
	inkomenhuishoudens	-,037	,011	-,223	-3,425	,001
	besteedbaarinkomenhuishoudens	-,135	,112	-,120	-1,205	,229
	@2016nabijheidziekenhuis	-1,048	1,070	-,077	-,980	,328
	@2017nabijheidgrotesupermarkt	-1,947	1,161	-,138	-1,678	,094
	procentuitkering	,075	,252	,027	,297	,766

a. Dependent Variable: procentpopulistenstem

Table 3: All variables

Table 2 shows the fit and significance level of my model and table 3 the positive or negative relation between the populist vote.

The variable household income has a significant negative correlation suggesting that higher earning couples are far less likely to vote for populist parties, this is supported by CBS data (Schmeets, 2015)

but when you correct income to disposable income it loses its significance. This suggests that people with a higher cost of living would be more inclined to vote for populist parties. But it is also an effect of the Dutch progressive tax system. Income is more unequal than real income. (Van den Brakel & Pouwels - Urlings 2019) The difference in real income are less stark therefore they are less significant in the model.

Age was a significant predictor of the populist vote, but only for older generations.

The higher percentage of 25 to 80 years old in a municipality the higher percentage the vote went to the populist. This was significant for all groups between 25 and 80+

But while the groups 25 - 45, 45 - 65 and 65 - 80 all had a positive relation with populist voting behavior, the 80+ category completely reversed this trend and they voted for PVV and FvD significantly less.

For the younger generation the effect was different as well. Municipalities with younger people tend to vote less populist but not significantly so.

On average people with a higher age have higher earnings. They have advanced further in their careers or have more certifications than their younger colleagues and generate higher income. Therefore it seems reasonable to suspect that municipalities with an older population would vote less for populist parties. The opposite is true, but this does reinforce the findings of Schmeets, (2015) That populist voters often have lower income regardless of age. Damhuis (2017) describes this as well, PVV-voters were more often than not people with few diploma's that have worked low income jobs over the course of their life.

The immigration effect is noteworthy precisely because it was wholly insignificant. Even more so because many people who voted for populist parties said that immigration was an important theme for their choice (Schmeets, 2015)

The amount of new buildings did have a significant effect. The more new housing is build in a municipality, the less people vote for populist parties. This might suggest that there is a housing shortage in the Netherlands. In essence this is the opposite of population decline. While I could not find a significant result for population decline and populist vote, Municipalities that see higher growth and development do tend to vote less for populist parties.

The percentage of people working in industry or the unemployment percentage were also not significant. The same goes for the availability of a hospital and a supermarket in the neighborhood. Overall the 2019 election results can be explained the best by personal socio-economic circumstances and second of importance is the human geography side as to where these voters are distributed across the nation. Again by comparing map 1 and map 2 it is clear there is no great cultural divide among historic different parts of the nation.

Historical context in regional differences

From the literature I learned that people do not only vote for parties because of the way things are. But also according to how they feel about the way things *are going*.

(Essletzbichler et al., 2018) (McQuarrie, 2017)

To test this I compared population and manufacturing employment data from 2009 and income data from 2011 with the data from 2017.

I chose these dates because of the financial crisis is 2008. The recovery of this crisis has not been going at the same speed everywhere. (Macleod & Jones, 2018)

For this analysis I've gone further back which means more cases lost to municipal reorganization. N=274

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,245 ^a	,060	,049	5,25048

a. Predictors: (Constant), jobsindusrychange, Besteedbaarchange, inwonerskm2change

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	480,341	3	160,114	5,808	,001 ^b
	Residual	7553,499	274	27,568		
	Total	8033,841	277			

a. Dependent Variable: procentpopulistenstem

b. Predictors: (Constant), jobsindusrychange, Besteedbaarchange, inwonerskm2change

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	28,081	1,750		16,045	,000
	Besteedbaarchange	-,554	,154	-,213	-3,600	,000
	inwonerskm2change	-,050	,081	-,037	-,620	,536
	jobsindusrychange	-,028	,014	-,117	-1,969	,050

a. Dependent Variable: procentpopulistenstem

Table 4: Multiple Linear regression model for demographic and economic changes.

Of all the variables I thought population change would be the strongest indicator. Normally when the population in a certain region shrinks it is a sign that there is a lack of opportunities and services in that area. (Van Dam et al., 2008) My hypothesis was that population decline would be a strong indicator for decline of prosperity and opportunities in a municipality and

that discontent among the remaining population would be high and would result in a higher proportional vote for populist parties.

Even though the effect is not strong it is significant.

Manufacturing employment opportunities and disposable income are both significant but only household disposable income change has any non negligible effect. Areas that have seen more recovery since the 2008 crisis are slightly less prone to vote for populist parties. 6% of the variance in the populist vote can be explained by the change in income and industrial jobs

Conclusions and Discussion:

Inglehart and Norris (2019) and Fukuyama (2018) describe a difference between economic populism and cultural populism. Economic populism is usually on the left of the political spectrum. And since the current populist wave is mostly fueled by right wing groups the current discontent within the population has to be sought in cultural factors.

There are economic aspects to it, but PVV-voters see this in the context of too much money taken from 'us' and too much going to 'them' (Damhuis, 2017)

Since the current populist parties in the Netherlands both promote stronger national control over borders, monetary policy, fishing grounds and trade deals and being against the Dutch EU-membership. Dutch populism is clearly not a rural phenomenon like it seems to be in America or Great Britain. Even when the villages lose population and job opportunities to the bigger cities (van Dam et al., 2018) the populist vote is not significantly higher in less densely populated municipalities.

It seems that The Netherlands does not contain any major regions whose inhabitants consider themselves 'left behind' like Brexit voters in the UK (Macleod & Jones, 2018)

I'm not sure if we can state that Dutch populism is driven by a different force than American or British populism, but the source is at the very least not easily identifiable on a map.

There are no regions that contrast really strong with other regions. Aside from a few select municipalities the discontent is spread evenly across the nation.

Because of these I would recommend doing research into spatial inequality on a smaller scale. To look within the municipalities with a high populist vote and research the difference on a neighbourhood level.

But regional level or provincial level might also yield different results. As it stands now a municipality with few job opportunities can be right next to a municipality with many more job opportunities. This may cloud the results and the variable job opportunities might become significant when measured on a scale where people are less likely to live in one region and work in the other.

Another suggestion would be to look at the numbers from a different time scale. For my thesis I compared data from 2009 and 2011 to 2017. While Macleod and Jones (2018) and McQuarrie (2017) looked at timescales from the 1970's or 1980 until now.

Besides from tweaking the parameters of more quantitative research it would also be informative to take the same qualitative approach as Damhuis (2017) and to just talk to the people in the places with the most extreme voting results.

In order to find out who these people are and what they need the easiest would be to go to Edam-Volendam and Rucphen and take a survey or do interviews.

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